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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

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Wednesday, November 21, 1934.
U. S. Department of Agriculture

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Subject: "Odds and Ends." Information from the Bureau of Biological Survey, the Weather Bureau, and the Bureau of Animal Industry, U.S.D.A.

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It looks to me as if this was likely to be another odds and ends day. I've made a collection of bits of information from the Department of Agriculture to pass along to you. And this appears to be a good day to do it.

Here's an interesting bit from the Bureau of Biological Survey. It's about that celebrated animal, the porcupine. Because of their quills, porcupines have always attracted much interest. But to the farmer or timber owner, the teeth of these animals are far more important than the quills. You see, in late summer, fall, and winter, porcupines get hungry for the inner layer of bark of young trees. In trying to get at it, they often girdle the trees, causing serious injury and often killing the trees. These sharp-toothed animals also sometimes damage cultivated crops, but that is chiefly during the spring and summer. Then they may destroy young fruit trees or feed on alfalfa and truck crops.

The common notion that the porcupine "shoots his quills" is a mistake, the scientists say. But the quills are so sharp and finely barbed that occasionally livestock and game animals are injured by them.

In areas where the porcupine population is large, these animals may become a troublesome pest. This is true in the West where the yellow-haired variety often does considerable damage to pine trees. Where porcupines occur in small numbers and are not seriously destructive, the scientists say they should not be molested.

By the way, if you happen to need advice as to effective methods of controlling porcupines, you can write to the Bureau of Biological Survey at Washington, D. C.

Turning our attention now from beast to bird, here's an item that may interest parrot owners. The parrots of the United States are expected to consume their usual quota of sunflower seed this year. But the production of this seed appears to be on the wane because the backyard poultry raiser is using more mash and less scratch feeds.

Sunflower seed is a standard feed for parrots and other cage birds. In scratch feed for poultry, it adds variety to the ration, increases both the

protein and fat content, and is considered particularly desirable during the molting period. While higher in protein and fat than either corn or wheat, sunflower seed is usually too high in price to make up more than a small percentage of a poultry feed, normally about one-fourth of one percent.

In Russia, sunflower seed is popular as a food and the oil is used for salads and cooking as well as in the manufacture of butter substitutes. During 1931 over twenty-seven million pounds of sunflower oil were imported from Russia, most of this being used in food products.

Here's a bit of weather news. Looking back over its records, the Weather Bureau says the month of October, just past, ranks high as a pleasant month over most of the United States. In fact, the weather-men say that this October brought more pleasant, sunny days than usual over the greater part of the country. It was a warmer month than normal and had less than normal rainfall. Unusually low temperatures were exceptions. And killing frosts didn't occur as far South as is usual.

Two new states joined the fifteen already accredited states for tuberculin-eradication on the first day of November. These were Virginia on the east Coast and Oregon on the west Coast. Both these States are now practically free of cattle tuberculosis because all cattle have been tested and all animals that reacted to the test have been slaughtered.

In both Virginia and Oregon the tuberculosis-eradication campaign started in 1917. Previous to that date in Virginia there had been considerable testing of the dairy herds supplying milk to the District of Columbia and other markets. After the so-called area plan was taken up, the volume of tuberculin testing of cattle in Virginia increased greatly and for the last six years an average of about a hundred and sixty thousand tuberculin tests were applied to the State each year. The degree of infection in recent years had been very low. Much credit for the completion of the eradication work in Virginia is due to the cooperation between State, county and Federal officials and herd owners.

Oregon's eradication work has had much the same history. It started in a small way in 1917 but during the last five years a hundred and fifty thousand tuberculin tests have been applied to cattle in the State each year and the degree of infection of tuberculosis has been very low during that period.

What about your State?

Here's a bit of advice from the Bureau of Agricultural Engineering on oiling any household machine. The engineers say the best guide for oiling is the one given by the manufacturer. You see, the design of the motor or the gear or the drive determines the kind of lubrication to use. The manufacturer naturally recommends what suits his appliance best.

By the way, a good grade of oil is important. A poor oil may seem to lubricate very nicely when first applied, but sooner or later it becomes dry and sticky and gums up the machine. If by accident you use poor oil, use kerosene to cut and remove the gummed oil and dirt. That will leave the machine clean and ready for new oil. Bearings that fit very tightly need a light oil. A heavy oil is too thick to flow into the narrow spaces between the bearing parts. This is why the manufacturer's directions will recommend that you use a light oil when the motor is new. As the bearings wear, a heavier oil is better.

